

LINES ON THE CAXTON CELEBRATION.

From "Punch."

Four hundred years!—Slow Cycles of Cathay
Might compass less of wondrous growth and change,
Than those four centuries, since that fateful day
When Colard Mansion's pupil brought away
From ancient Bruges his book-work new and strange.

Father of English Printing! 'Tis a name
To front the Ages with, and ask their need.
What fitter title to enduring fame,
Midst the uncounted myriads he may claim,
As gathered fruit of which he sowed the seed?

The sturdy Kentish man, whose solid sense
Shaped us the tool which built us half our glory,
Better deserves our age's recompense
Of praise and anniversary eloquence,
Than half the heroes who yet live in story.

If Gutenberg, Fust, Schœffer, famous band,
Record of stone and bronze in Mentz may share,
Our English Caxton, in the native land
Whose tongue he loved, and helped to shape, should stand
In monumental image sculptured fair.

The mercer's son, who reared his "red pale" sign
In Margaret's almshouse so long ago,
Who praised and printed Chaucer's spring-tide line,
Finds fitting spokesman in the brave divine
Who knows those precincts as few else may know.

"On, Stanley, on!" The task is one that fits
Thy liberal soul. To him you'd celebrate
Poets and politicians, saints and cities,
Philosophers and princes, traders, wits,
Alike are debtors for their powers and state.

FAMOUS ENGLISH PRINTERS.

The better title would be "Famous Printers of English," for many of Caxton's successors were foreigners. And, perhaps, this may account for Caxton's own persistency in announcing his nationality. He learned his art abroad, and when he died it was chiefly foreign craftsmen who took it up and perpetuated it. And thus we get German, Norman, and Belgian names on the title-pages of the old volumes. In these early books the printer comes before us as an artist, and not as a craftsman. His work is often more interesting than his author. He became in effect, a patron of literature. He had to make a good and wise selection, for the printing of a volume was no trifling investment. Thus printer and author go side by side, as publisher and author have gone in later days. Caxton and Chaucer are associated as indissolubly as Scott and Constable or Byron and Murray. Most of these old books were what we should call standard, and many of them were law books. Thus William of Machlinia is chiefly known as the printer of the first edition of "Littleton's Tenures." It is a small folio volume printed in a coarse Gothic letter, without a date, but issued from their office, known to have been near All Hallows Church.

But the most eminent of Caxton's successors was Wynkyn de Worde. He was probably an apprentice, certainly an assistant, of our English printer, worked with him at Westminster, and issued books from the same office after his death. Like Caxton, he was a master in his craft, and introduced many improvements in the new invention. His works are admirable for their neatness and elegance. He designed and cut his own punches, sinking them into matrices and casting his own letters. He was a man of enterprise as well as of taste and education. The catalogue of his issues is known to have in-

cluded at least 508 examples, of which the most notable is the "Polychronicon." As we have seen William de Machlinia publishing the first edition of a law book, still quoted in our courts, so Wynkyn de Worde is associated with a school book of which all scholars and students have at least heard. This is the famous "Lilye's Grammar." There is now no extant copy of the work with the printer's name to it, but a contemporary work of Whittington was repeatedly printed by him. Indeed, most of his books are what we should call educational. Books were then printed for scholars, not for the circulating library, and De Worde's catalogue is largely made of "Accidences," "Lucidaries," "Orchards of Words"—a phrase somewhat analogous to the Latin *anthologia*—and "Promptuaries for Little Children."

A contemporary of De Worde, and a fellow-workman with him in Caxton's office, was Kiehard Pynson, a Norman by birth, and the introducer of that useful series of works which form the basis of subsequent "Year Books," as they were called by him, and still retain his title. Here, again, we find education to be the chief motive of issue. The first treatise on arithmetic published in England was printed by Pynson—the date 1522, the title "Libri 4 de arte supputandi," and the author one of the first mathematicians of the age, Tonstall, Bishop of London. Pynson styled himself "King's Printer" on his title-pages, but though his successor held a patent, it is not believed that any previous right of that kind had been given by the Crown. The new art was, however, not to be confined to the capital. The men of letters in those days were the bishops and ecclesiastics, and soon all the great cities set up their printing offices and published their issues. But it is notable how the master printer was generally a foreigner. One of the most eminent of them was Peter de Friers, a native of the town now generally known as Trèves, who started his office at the south side of the Thames, where he published Latin works of Cato and Erasmus. From this time presses began to be freely set up. The Universities—Canterbury, Norwich, Tavistock—became great centres of this kind of trade, and it is recorded that in 1538, when Cardinal Wolsey visited his native town, he commemorated the visit by establishing a printing office at Ipswich.

Scotland soon followed in the wake of England, and Ireland came last. Ireland was in fact the last European country—unless we can call Russia a European country in the sixteenth century—which received the art of printing. A volume of the Book of Common Prayer, printed in London so late as 1551, is the first Irish book, and this was followed by a liturgy for the use of the Scotch Highlanders printed in the Irish character. The interest of the publications has been chiefly their antiquity. They are curious and archaeological. Clearness and beauty of type came afterwards. In that department our printers have certainly been surpassed by foreigners—Aldus, Elzevir, and even Didot being superior. One of the greatest names is John Baskerville, whose publications are still occasionally to be picked up cheap on the London book-stalls. He was no tradesman in his craft, but spared neither pains nor money to make his work worthy of his name. Printing with him was in fact what Walter Shandy would have called his hobby horse. He is said to have spent £600 before he could get a single letter which

came up to his own standard of excellence, and he had invested thousands in the business before he could make it pay. In fact, with him it was not a business but an art. He did not adopt it to make, but to spend money already made. His issues have very much the same kind of excellence as compared with contemporary and subsequent prints that Josiah Wedgwood's plates and vases have with reference to their modern rivals. He saw to everything himself. He manufactured his own printing ink, presses, moulds. Though he was a wealthy man he was not ashamed of the trade which he had adopted. In fact, it was not a trade for him, but an occupation. On the panels of his carriage he had caused to be painted a series of the different processes in printing. His chief excellence was in the construction of his italic letters. They are thought by judges to stand unrivalled for freedom and symmetry. Many of his books were printed from silver types, and thus gain a delicacy which makes the paper appear almost like vellum. We shall scarcely again have such a printer. The man was an eccentric; found his reward, not in what he made by his books, but in what he made them. He died at the beginning of this century, and ordered that he should be buried in his own garden, and his dying wish was respected. Since his day science has been busy in invention and its application to art, but his work holds its place still. We have had greater printers, but we have scarcely had better printed books.

THE TIMES is the name of a new weekly published at Iroquois, Ont., by Mr. J. H. Graham. The outfit came from the Dominion Type Foundry.

THE MORNING HERALD is the name of a new daily published in Ottawa. A complete outfit, including a Potter Press, was supplied for it from this foundry.

THE BORDERER, published at Sackville, N.B., recently passed into the hands of Mr. W. K. Reynolds, jr. A new dress (much needed) was at once ordered from this foundry, and the appearance of the paper is greatly improved.

At the Provincial Exhibition held last month in the city of Quebec, we exhibited a font of Brevier beautifully arranged in a neat mahogany case. We intend making a good exhibit at the Paris Exposition.

MR. OSCAR H. HARPEL, author of Harpel's Typograph, writes to say that all the editions of that excellent work have been exhausted, and that it will be impossible to even supply a single copy hereafter.

We have received specimens of programme and cheque work from the *British Whig*, Kingston, which for neatness and general good taste are worthy of special mention. The designing and selection of colors reflect the highest credit on Mr. W. T. Jones, Superintendent of the Job Department.

HYDRAULIC PRESS.

We have for sale a No. 2 Tangye Hydraulic Press (new). Has two pumps; ram, 4 inches with 14 inches run out, and 46 inches between. Platen 32 x 22. Tested to 30 tons. Price \$325.